Representing an Ethnic Community in a Communist State: Transylvanian Hungarian Intellectuals between Cohabitation and Resistance

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REPRESENTING AN ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN A COMMUNIST STATE: TRANSYLVANIAN HUNGARIAN INTELLECTUALS BETWEEN COHABITATION AND RESISTANCE

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***Abstract*:** This study addresses the changing strategies of social inclusion, which the Hungarian elites in Romania pursued after WWII. The establishment of communist rule in Romania involved the members of the Hungarian ethnic minority in very different ways. As early as 1946, inner tensions and debates occurred inside this community, while groups from its elite organized manifestations of resistance against the new rulers. After 1947, the communist leadership of Romania dramatically changed its policies with regard to the ethnic Hungarians, and this caused a great disillusion to those who believed that the collective rights of minorities would be guaranteed in the new political framework. The events of 1956 reshaped the way the cultural elites of that ethnic group related to the communist regime. Later, the manifest nationalistic propaganda of late communism in Romania generated political dissent among the members of a new generation of Hungarian intellectuals. It is in that period that the post-1989 political strategies of this community originate. When the cultural elite of the Hungarian minority had to assume the role of building a representative political structure in the transition to democracy, its representatives continued to a great extent to act like in late communism.

***Keywords*:** intellectuals; communism; minorities; social inclusion; political integration; cohabitation; collaboration; protest; intellectual resistance; samizdat; cultural identity; ethnicity; transition.

At the end of WWII, the Hungarian intellectual elite from Transylvania, and its members with a background in humanities or social sciences in particular, redefined their mission of representing the community of the Hungarians living in Romania. This task was nonetheless to be carried out taking into account an ethnic concept of the Hungarian community and a social imperative: the very preservation of this community. Accordingly, the Hungarian community in Transylvania conceived itself in ethno-linguistic terms and as integral part of the larger Hungarian nation, which came to be divided due to the post-WWI geopolitical changes (Borsody 1988, 11-27). At the same time, the representatives of this community acknowledged the fact that their ethnic group was a minority in the newly established Romanian communist state, which they viewed as an institutional protector of a newly emerging

multi-ethnic political community. In this frame, the ethnic Hungarians were supposed to become a collective pillar of a political nation, defined in terms of citizenship. Such a view was consistent with the basic terms of the political alliance of 1945-46, which the Hungarian People's Union and the communist-dominated governmental coalition led by Petru Groza agreed upon. Later, the constitutional-administrative arrangement that led to the establishment of the Hungarian Autonomous Region in 1952 reinforced the idea of a multi-ethnic political community. The main goal of the Hungarian minority, its cultural reproduction, could have only been achieved through a network of educational institutions in the native tongue. These ideas regarding the preservation of the ethnic community actually reinforced the role of representation, which the intellectual elite of the Hungarians living in Romania assumed. This minority elite believed in, and argued for, cohabitation and cooperation with the representatives of the communist and presumably internationalist state. Their negotiation with the political establishment was carried out on grounds of collective rights and cultural reproduction. However, the response of these authorities was contrary to their expectations. In the late 1950s, the successive attempts at restricting or dismantling parts of the network of educational institutions in the Hungarian language illustrated that the increasingly Romanian-dominated communist regime changed its agenda. While carefully distancing itself from the Soviet Union, the Bucharest-based communist elite began building a new legitimizing narrative, which was based on Romanian ethno-nationalism. As this study illustrates, the Hungarian intellectual elite gradually turned to acts of resistance and then dissent against the ruling political regime. This author argues that the turn in the strategy of the Hungarian intellectual elite in Transylvania was inspired by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and catalyzed by the wave of repression against those who sympathized with individuals and groups from the neighboring country. The anti-regime reaction of the Hungarians living in Romania gained momentum after 1959 and, as shown below, evolved gradually from Marxist-revisionism into an open criticism based on alternative values to communism, epitomized by the samizdat of the late 1970s and the 1980s.

The establishment of the communist regime in Romania implied social and economic transformations, as well as restrictions, opportunities, persecutions, possibilities and limitations, which a centralized totalitarian state imposed upon the entire society, regardless of ethnic origin. At the same time, the same communist regime implemented gradually a set of political or administrative decisions, which referred to the ethnic Hungarians as a separate group, which in fact contradicted the official party narrative regarding the building a non-discriminatory society. The response of the Hungarian minority to the communist regime in Romania was defined mostly in ethnic terms, even by those who embraced leftist ideals, for this regime also acted and

conceptualized this community as a separate ethnicity. This type of mutual relation had an impact on the specific legislation which aimed at the integration of this community in communist Romania. On the one hand, these policies (which the Hungarians in the communist leadership first supported) sought in fact to dissolve any alternative source of solidarity among minority members, to the point of expecting assimilatory effects. On the other hand, these policies strengthened the commitment of several intellectual groups inside this ethnic community towards questioning the integrative strategy promoted by its representatives in the communist establishment and, on its turn, reinforced the ethnic frame of interpreting the relation with the ruling regime.

The strategy which the elite of the Hungarian community pursued in order to represent the interests of that ethnic group in post-1945 Romania was influenced by a set of defining elements which were anchored in their previous experiences: (1) as a minority in Greater Romania; (2) as resulting from the competing Romanian and Hungarian nation-building processes; and (3) as derived from the direct involvement of some members of this community in the communist takeover in Romania. As well known, the Hungarians living in Romania settled mainly in the regions of Transylvania, the Banat and Szatmar/Bihar counties, which represented the easternmost and relatively underdeveloped regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, incorporated after WWI in the Romanian Kingdom, where they became its western and most developed parts. In particular, Transylvania, with its cities, towns and markets, with its industrial and communication infrastructures, and its population which was mainly rural, but driven by a market-oriented production of goods, represented a model of modernization, capitalistic mindset and bourgeois way of life for the rest of Romania. Rural Transylvania was dominated by the ethnic Romanians, while the Hungarian, German and Jewish communities remained prevalent in urban areas until the mid twentieth century.

Governmental decrees banned the establishment of a Hungarian Union in Greater Romania. This form of organization was conceived as a representative body of all Hungarians living in this country, with economic, social and political functions, as well as prerogatives of representing the community not only in relation to the Romanian state, but also to relevant international institutions. In this view, the Hungarian community was defined as a state forming co-actor, as a contractual part of a plural Romanian constitutional community, which had its collective rights granted by the legal frames of the Wilsonian world order. The rejection of this project pushed the Hungarian community to frame its organization and representation after 1922 on the basis of a political party (Országos Magyar Párt – Hungarian National Party), while the traditional churches of the Hungarian community supported the education and implicitly the cultural reproduction of this group. The radical land reform

introduced after WWI in Romania, the constitutional and administrative frames of the new "unitary nation state," the educational system which allowed only private schools subsidized by churches to organize instruction in the native language of the minorities created frustrations among Hungarians, who felt as under constant siege. For that reason, issues like the education the Hungarian language became sensitive and attracted ever since the constant attention of the elites of this community (Lönhárt 2008, 127-149; Mikó 1988, 19-26).

Apart from these tensions, continuous controversies existed between the Romanian local and central elites. First, the policy of building a centralized state frustrated the local elites after 1920, when these found themselves deprived of any means of controlling the regional sources of wealth and implicitly of economic and social influence.[1] After 1932, the local elites had definitely lost ground in front of the central elites and the increasingly authoritarian monarchy. The central elites were organized around the National Liberal Party, which managed to control the economic resources of the entire country through the administrative centralization and the financial institutions it established. The administrative and the electoral systems were part of its philosophy of building a body of strong central institutions capable of keeping under their unmitigated authority the different regions of the Romanian nation-state. From their point of view, ethnic diversity represented centrifugal forces working against Romanian sovereignty.[2]

As for the competing Hungarian and Romanian nation-building processes and the associated international agreements, they had led already three times in the first half of the twentieth century to the change of interstate borders (in 1920, 1940 and 1947). Moreover, these divergent processes separated the ethically different elite groups in Transylvania and thus the Romanians rethought their priorities and ended by having an agenda more and more opposed to that of the Hungarians. During WWII, the very possibility of losing the region to Hungary reshaped the political priorities of the Romanian Transylvanian elite and particularly those of the National Peasant Party, so much that it became a very committed political agent for restoring the Romanian nation state's sovereignty over the entire region. This goal had not only the absolute support of the Romanian society, but also the underpinning of its interwar political rivals from the National Liberal Party. Thus, the Hungarian elite increasingly identified the Romanian elite in Transylvania with the conflicting

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[1] Organized around the old cadres of the Romanian National Party, led by Iuliu Maniu, the Transylvanian Romanian elite represented the main opposition force in the interwar years. United in 1926 with the Peasant Party, they continued to demand a decentralized administration, pro-middle-class economic policies to favor the little entrepreneurs and economic development based on the agrarian profile of the country, while arguing in favor of Anglo-Saxon financial investments (Livezeanu 1998; Ornea 1969; Stan 1997; Stan 1999).

[2] For the role of the National Liberal Party led by Ion I. C. Brătianu and the ruling elites in interwar Romania, see Livezeanu (1998), Hitchins (1995) and Ornea (1980).

ethnic agenda, while the latter no longer considered the former a plausible political ally. Any political debate over the control of local resources or the administrative and political influence in the region was suspended after 1940.

During this time span, the Hungarian community in Transylvania had to meet the challenge of being divided by the Second Vienna Award. Accordingly, the part of the community from Northern Transylvania went through the restoration of Hungarian authority, with all the opportunities and conflicting situations which resulted. For instance, the post-1920 generation of Transylvanian Hungarians, who affirmed their political beliefs in the late 1930s and the beginning of 1940s, was not embracing the conservative beliefs of either the Hungarian National Party in Romania or the Hungarian central government in Budapest. For them, the national-democratic, the agrarian-socialist or even the Marxist forms of expressing their frustrations generated by the social and economic challenges of the 1930s were much more relevant. After 1940, the need of reforms in the once again eastern peripheries of the Hungarian Kingdom dominated their agenda.[3] Marxism was embraced by some members of the Hungarian community even before 1940 because this represented a powerful idea which helped them challenge the authority of the Romanian Kingdom. Their vision was rooted in wishful thinking rather than empirical research, as the Soviet propaganda made them believe in the utopian project of egalitarian socialism and the community of peacefully coexisting nations.[4] After 1945, these illusions dramatically changed when facing reality, but the agenda of these intellectuals changed only after 1949/1950. In comparison, the local Hungarian community in southern Transylvania was deprived in 1940-44 of all its political or economic influence,[5] for the Second Vienna Awards did not leave them any means of negotiating with the central government. The government led by Marshal Ion Antonescu defined them once again as a source of internal destabilization and a danger to the nation-state, which had thus to be kept under surveillance and neutralized.

Finally, the involvement of the representatives of the Hungarian community in the communist takeover in Romania represents a highly controversial issue in recent historiography. On the one hand, Hungary did not succeed in switching sides during the war, while immediately after the war the Soviets had less influence, for after the elections of October 1945 and until 1947, its government was not led by the communists, but by the Smallholders'

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3 For Northern Transylvanian political options, see Bárdi (2003, 134-137); Lakatos (2005, 366-378); Vita (2014, passim).

4 For the Marxist beliefs of Hungarian ethnic minority representatives, see Vincze (1999, 263-269); Lönhárt (2008, 140-147); Balogh (1978, passim); Demeter (1975, passim).

5 For Hungarians in Southern Transylvania in 1940-44, see Balogh (2013, passim); Kacsó (1993, 377-394); Csatári (1968, 143-144); Lönhárt (2008, 157-161).

Party. On the other hand, Romania's geo-strategic position allowed a more direct Soviet involvement in politics from 1945 onwards. In this context, Northern Transylvania which was formerly under Hungarian administration was put under the Soviet Military Authority (Sălăgean 2002, Nagy 2001; Lönhárt 2008, 166-179; Nagy & Vincze 2004). As a result, the autonomist discourse flourished, while the experience of strengthened regional institutions and networks redirected the Hungarian community's collective agenda towards an administrative solution in terms of regional autonomy. At the same time, the question of Transylvania became a tool of political blackmail against Romania, which the Soviets used in order to enforce communist rule in this country (Sălăgean 2002; Ţârău 2005).

All the above described experience of the interwar and war years reshaped the strategy of inclusion pursued by the local Hungarian elite. The proximity of the Hungarian state lost its importance after the Peace Treaties were signed in February 1947 and borders were once again resettled. Already the experience of 1944-45 made the representatives of the Hungarian community cease thinking in terms of returning to their mother country and start searching for solutions of integrating their ethnic group in communist Romania. Many counted on the political capital gained by supporting the communist-dominated Soviet-imposed government of Petru Groza in a key moment of late 1945, when this had to fight for legitimacy internally, as well as internationally, for it was rightfully contested as non-representative for the political spectrum in postwar Romania. Then, some members of the Hungarian minority believed that *a relation based on reciprocity* could have been established between their ethnic community and the new central political power. The "loyal support" given by the Hungarian People's Union (UPM) was indeed instrumental in the period of the communist takeover of 1945-47 (Lönhárt 2008, 227-301). Some demands of the Hungarian community were thus met by the policies of the Groza government. Also, the official discourse on the Hungarian – Romanian relations was redefined: instead of the traditional rhetoric dominated by controversies over border and territorial issues, a new discourse of integrating the ethnic Hungarians emerged. This referred to new constitutional-legal frames, as well as political and administrative means, which were meant to guarantee adequate representation and equal status for that community in Romania and even envisaged the "spiritualizion of borders" in the Danube region. The new elites of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania identified with this discourse and thought its best strategy was cooperation with the communist-led government in order to enlarge the legislation that guaranteed the rights of their minority group. In 1945-47, this cooperation indeed helped them build an entire network of educational, cultural and economic institutions, place its representatives in locals and regional administrative bodies and change a significant part of the laws regarding minorities.

However, the Romanians communists, once their political enemies were isolated or eliminated, began thinking of gaining national legitimacy by promoting the image of a Romanian Communist Party that had regained Transylvania back. Also, the communist-led government dissolved the local administrative structures built under the Soviet military control in Northern Transylvania and then isolated and stigmatized the autonomist group of left-wing Hungarian social-democrats and communists, represented by Lajos Jordáky, István Lakatos, Géza Pásztai etc. (Nagy & Vincze 2004). Besides, other tensions arouse, such as those generated by the clarification of the citizenship of those individuals who fled before the war front passed and then returned, the establishment of the size of the Hungarian property sequestrated as enemy goods (CASBI) or the impact of the land reform law of March 1945. In addition, the still existing "interning camps," where a part of the adult male Hungarian population was still detained, stirred anxiety and indignation. The Declaration offered by the leaders of the UPM, which sustained the unaltered Romanian sovereignty over Transylvania and reaffirmed its belief in solving all minority demands through the establishment of a "real democracy" under the communist-dominated government (17 November 1945), unleashed waves of protest in the first half of 1946. These culminated with the open demonstration of 30 June 1946 against the UPM and the communist-led government. This was in fact a counter-demonstration to the closing act of the UPM congress held in Odorheiu Secuiesc, where the members of the government had to assist to the destruction of all triumphant settings which their ally organization displayed in their honor (Lönhárt 2008, 323).

In that particular moment, all the prerequisites for a real public debate on the strategy to be adopted for achieving the best representation of interests existed inside the Hungarian community. However, the alternative groups never came together, while official media obviously did not cover their views. These contesting groups were organized around the traditional cultural and economic organizations and leaders, such as Pál Szász, Ede Korparich, Ádam Teleki, Alajos Boga, Géza Nagy, or the traditional Hungarian churches, which contestated the UPM as the sole legitimate representative of this ethnic community. The activity of Áron Márton, the bishop of the Roman-Catholic Church is relevant for this matter. He criticized the new course of the Hungarian representative bodies as counterproductive, searched for allies in the traditional Romanian parties and opposed the new cultural and educational policies of the regime (Márton 1996, 139-151; Fülöp & Vincze 1998, 60; Lönhárt 2008, 318-320). The contacts between the Hungarian opposition groups and the historical Romanian political parties, like the National Peasant Party or the National Liberal Party, remained sporadic though, while the negotiations for an agreement before the elections of 19 November 1946 unfinished (Lönhárt 2008,

318-319). Thus, the alternative groups failed to counterbalance the overwhelming influence of those leading figures allied with the communist-led government of Romania, which dealt with them from a dominant position.

After the elections of 19 November 1946, which were in fact an electoral fraud that served the interests of the UPM as well, the communist leaders found themselves finally in the position to institutionalize total control over mass-organizations. When the leaders of the UPM reiterated openly their demands in the National Assembly, counting on the promises made in the electoral period, any communication or possibility of negotiation was cut abruptly to their astonishment. Already in full control and with the borders confirmed after the signing of the Peace Treaty in Paris, the communist party leaders were no longer willing to promote the legislation promised to their "fellow travelers." A new official narrative emerged, which insisted on the imperative of "sharpening the class struggle" and denounced the "reactionary" ideas of "national unity," which allegedly undermined solidarity (Lönhárt 2008, 344-345). This change of discourse was followed by an open demand of restructuring the UPM in accordance with ideological premises which had to take into account that class struggle existed inside the ethnic Hungarian community as well. In fact, this meant the elimination of those leaders of the UPM who thought in the paradigm of representing the interests of the ethnic community, like Edgár Balogh, Lajos Jordáky, Gyárfás Kurkó. Isolated, then imprisoned and put on trial, these Hungarian communists were no longer mentioned publicly after 1949. Their case represents an illustration of the very fact that in a totalitarian regime alternative sources of political legitimacy, at collective or individual levels, could not exist.

In addition, the Yugoslav-Soviet split and the Berlin crisis changed the international context and determined a modification of the domestic agenda of the communist regimes, which further engaged in strengthening control over the society in order to reassure the loyalty of different social and ethnic groups. Thus, the relation between the political center and specific group was reinterpreted. In 1949-55, not only the traditional elite, but also the members of the communist elite became victims of the repression. In several waves of arrests and trials, the leaders of the traditional Hungarian political, ecclesiastical, economic elite, as well as the leaders of the UPM or of the regional communist organizations who were of Hungarian background, came to be incriminated, isolated, imprisoned and even executed. The most important was the 1949 trial which involved the main representatives of the UPM, Hungarian social-democrats and even some communist regional leaders (like Lajos Jordáky, for instance), aside the Roman-Catholic Bishop of Transylvania Áron Márton. Shortly after, in 1953, the UMP was dissolved, and so the establishment of the one-party system was complete.

When evaluating this evolution, one has also to keep in mind the nature of the Romanian political regime in the first half of the 1950s, which was in

essence a Stalinist totalitarian regime, heavily influenced in its administrative policy by the Soviet model. Thus, Romania was the only state in Eastern Europe which reevaluated the integration of national minorities in 1952 and introduced the Soviet administrative multi-level structure, including autonomous regions.[6] According to this logic, the Hungarian minority was redefined as the community of Hungarian-speaking workers, while the solution for their social inclusion was purely administrative. This 1952 "administrative solution" of integrating a multiethnic society in a socialist state was introduced at a time when Stalin personally showed interest in reading and editing the new Romanian constitution and the related administrative reform. As archival documents illustrate, the final decision was made at the highest possible level in Moscow, simultaneously with the modification of the Polish constitution (Bottoni 2007, 61-68). Accordingly, the Romanian Constitution of 24 September 1952 stipulated the establishment of the Hungarian Autonomous Region. Thus, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej signed on 29 January 1953 a declaration which was released to the press, where he clearly stated that "the minority problem has been solved". The complex formal and informal relations between the representatives of the Hungarian community and the central institutions of the regime were built from then onwards on a new basis. The entire ethnic community was integrated through the new administrative structures of the party-state, while any alternative source of collective identification and representation was de-legitimized. All activities were reframed on the basis of a new type of socialist solidarity, built around the exclusive legitimacy of the proletarian class, represented by the communist party and the new state built by it. Particularly interesting is how cultural and educational policies reformulated the old internationalist principles into the new slogan "national in forms, socialist in content."

The first years after the imperative imposition of the Stalinist model were marked by the illusion of a genuine administrative autonomy within the Hungarian Autonomous Region, entertained by the presence of some representative of the UPM in the local and regional bodies, as well as their prerogatives in building the legal frame for integrating the Hungarian

[6] The Hungarian Autonomous Region embodied mainly the Hungarian community of the Szeklerland (the eastern counties of Transylvania), which was almost exclusively inhabited by ethnic Hungarians. This region was overwhelmingly rural; the few small cities centers served as economic and administrative centers. This compact Hungarian presence was located in the geographic center of Romania. From that region to the Romanian-Hungarian borders, there were also other Hungarian communities, which were located mainly in urban centers of the Middle Transylvanian Plain and of the Szamos and the Maros Valleys opening to the Hungarian Great Plain. In these areas of Romania, Hungarians were still in relative majority in urban areas immediately after WWII, but they were surrounded by dominantly Romanian rural areas (Bottoni 2007, 61-88).

educational and cultural institutional network in the official state-subsidized system. This administrative change was perceived by the Hungarian minority in slightly different ways, but it certainly marked the ambivalent situation in which this community found itself in the mid 1950s. The Home Rule of the Autonomous Region, which according Article 21 had to be made by the Regional Popular Council and sanctioned by the Great National Assembly, was never ratified at central level, although a plan was devised in 1955. In addition, several administrative measures restrained the Hungarian institutional framework outside this area.[7] These measures seemed to suggest that the legislative guarantees for the institutions of the Hungarian minority were restricted only the territory of the Autonomous Region, while the situation outside was uncertain and out of the control of the community. The city of Cluj, which represented the traditional center of the Hungarian political, economic and cultural institutional network, was not included in the Hungarian Autonomous Region. Thus, its position was challenged by new centers. Accordingly, Târgu Mureş emerged in the early 1950s as an alternative regional center, reinforced by the partial relocation of Hungarian cultural and educational institutions.

New intellectual elites were recruited and promoted in the local press or cultural institutions, which were easily controlled by the central political structures. However, that generation of young intellectuals, which included András Sütő, Sándor Kányadi, László Földes, Sándor Huszár etc., embraced not only the socialist core of the official legitimizing narrative, but also the idea of collective rights and assumed the role of the intellectuals (of cultural elites) in "enlightening the people," as well as the communitarian responsibility of "representing the many." They regarded their role of representing their community as a vocation even. Yet, the popular slang enriched with a name for this category of representatives for the Hungarian minority who had to negotiate all issues at central institutional level in the capital city: "Bukarest járás" (Bányai 2006, passim). This was a derogatory reference to the old medieval custom of resolving any issue in Istanbul, with the sultan and his court. Some of these

[7] The Hungarian Writers' Union newspaper was relocated in Târgu Mureş in 1953 and the Theatre Art Institute in 1954. In Cluj, the Hungarian section of the Mechanical Institute was dissolved in the 1953/1954 academic year. The Agronomy Institute was not given new places for Hungarian students at the beginning of the 1955/1956 academic year, but only in the summer of 1956, after the representatives of the Hungarian community intervened at the highest level. On 15 July 1956, a resolution of the party and the state central organs appeared and stipulated the reframing of minorities' education in mixed classes in all schools, high-schools and universities. These measures were accompanied by worrisome rumors of a possible relocation of the Hungarian Bolyai University from Cluj to Târgu Mureş, which proved wrong, for eventually the university was "united" with the Romanian Babeş University in the same city and not relocated, but it created serious concerns inside the community (Vincze 1999, 81-82).

representatives, who were really connected at central level became perceived rather as part of the nomenclature than of their ethnic community, for they seemed to act and think as such and thus were pejoratively compared with the "janicsárs."[8]

In 1956, the flow of information and cultural interchange between Romania and Hungary was almost inexistent as compared to previous years. To this situation, the elite of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) contributed to the greatest extent; tactical reasons determined them to keep the Hungarians in Romania apart from the influence of the reforms proposed by the Imre Nagy government. However, after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a relaxation of the system could be observed. Above all, travel became easier, as passports were grated in higher number to university staff willing to visit Hungarian institutions, as well as to relatives wishing to resume family contacts. As the information became to flow in, the Hungarian minority and its intellectual elite were electrified. Thus, the Bolyai University, which was the veritable Hungarian intellectual nerve-center, gave reasons of concern to the communist party structures. In August 1956, Miron Constantinescu, at that time a member of the Politburo, had to meet the delegates of the Hungarian intellectuals and listen to their demands, which referred not only to the preservation of the network of educational institutions, but also to the reestablishment of the UMP as the legitimate body of political representation and to the issuance of a Status Law for Minorities (Benkő 2008). In this situation of potential instability, some positive measures meant to relax the tensions were taken. Among these were the reestablishment of a Hungarian section at the Agronomy Institute, the founding of a General Management Bureau for Nationalities inside the Ministry of Education and, beginning with 1957, of two periodicals in the Hungarian language: the traditional Marxist review *Korunk* and a new literary magazine for youth, named *Napsugár* (Vincze 1999, 82).

However, the desire of change still mobilized the energies of the university youth and the young intellectuals. In October 1956, the opportunity of reframing the Organization of the Communist Youth at the beginning of the academic year generated new ideas of reform and institutional change that exceeded the limits allowed by the regime. The memorandum authored by the students of the Bolyai University asked not only for an independent students' organization and the end of party control over it, but also for the rethinking of the institutional and ideological basis of education as part of a general reform, for the reestablishment of the autonomy of all universities, for the reintegration of the national Hungarian canon in the curricula, etc. The echoes of the revolution and fight for freedom against the Soviet intervention spread from the

[8] "Janicsár" (Yeniseri) – soldiers of the Turkish Empirial Army of Christian origin, who nonetheless fully identified with the imperial idea and thus were regarded as individuals who turned against their own ethnic group of origin.

Hungarians in Romania to the Romanian students, who also organized meetings and debated on memoranda in Timişoara, Iaşi, Craiova and Bucharest (Dávid et al. 2006, 23, Sitaru 2004, passim). In the All Saints' Day of 1 November 1956, the lights of candles were seen by the observing eyes of the regime as signs of solidarity with those shot in the streets of Budapest (Dávid et al. 2006, 22-23). In this particular context, as documents show, some officers and soldiers of the Romanian People's Army planned and even initiated an armed resistance against the regime (the Mărgineanu case in the Someş region).

The Hungarian intellectuals, in particular those of Marxist convictions, believed that the limits imposed by the communist regime were to be trespassed. Regarding the struggle for reforms in Hungary, some believed to experience a historical moment, when their own reformist ideals, hampered hitherto by the dogmatism of the center, could have been fulfilled (Dávid et al. 2006, 190). Others from the non-Marxist group of intellectuals or from the personalities connected to the traditional churches made plans for organizing a Christian Workers Party around a national agenda and for a possible armed uprising (the Szoboszlay group case).[9] However, another part of the Hungarian intellectuals saw these events as endangering the institutional gains of the last decade, for the limits of the regime had been already transgressed. Thus, they formulated "declarations of loyalty" with the central political bodies in media. Individuals like János Fazekas, György Kovács and Pál Bugyi were instrumental in this respect (Vincze 1999, 83).

At the same time, the communist regime in Bucharest reacted harshly to the events in Hungary and began repression against those who displayed their support for the insurgents and their reformist ideas in the neighboring country. Official discourses condemned the "counterrevolution" in Hungary, as well as the "nationalistic," "right-wing," "deviationist" opportunism of the revolutionaries, which was defined as a main threat to the building of a socialist society. The results of the subsequent wave of repression were more than 34,000 people arrested, of whom only some 5,000 were officially put on trial, while the others imprisoned for long periods without at least a formal trial, some even executed (Dávid et al. 2006; Pál-Antal 2006). The main Hungarian cultural institutions were suspected of "grave errors" and "nationalistic, reactionary attitudes." Consequently, many professionals were ousted from the educational system. In fact, the ideological performance of the entire Hungarian educational system was questioned, for it failed to "grow the socialist internationalist spirit in national forms" (Vincze 1999). As well documented, the support offered by the RWP in restoring the communist regime in Hungary, as well as in capturing the members of the Nagy government and in keeping

[9] See A Belügyminisztérium összefoglaló jelentése a Szoboszlay-féle Keresztény Dolgozók Pártjáról Bukarest, 1958. [szeptember 1. után] (Bottoni 2006, 363-369). See also Péterszabó (2002, passim).

them under tight control in the Snagov area, was indeed essential (Baráth & Sipos 2006; Nagy 2004). This active involvement proved that there was a real interest among the Romanian communist leadership in restoring Soviet control over Hungary. At the same time, it reasserted the loyalty of the Romanian communists to the Soviet Union and the communist world movement. Thus, János Kádár thanked his Romanian colleagues by recognizing in 1958 that the case of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania was a closed issue. Not only the Hungarian nomenklatura was grateful, but also Khrushchev reconsidered the Romanian demand of withdrawing the Soviet Army from this country. Paradoxically, this "loyalty" proved by the Romanian regime to the cause of world communism in 1956 helped it later to distance itself from the Soviet Union, and to become a critic of its domination inside the Eastern Bloc.

At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of 1960s, the Romanian communist regime changed its position towards the national question, as part of its plan to emancipate itself from the Soviet tutelage and rebuild its internal legitimacy on a new, national basis. Thus, the official discourse was enriched with elements from the national agenda to such an extent that it arrived at using with extreme efficiency the theme of nationalism. The new discourse, which made massive references to the conflicting national histories of the two countries, implicitly suggested that the Hungarian minority was generally distrusted by the communist central leadership because of the Transylvanian echoes of the Hungarian Revolution. In the midst of the new process of "building the Romanian socialist nation," the elite of this community found itself totally marginalized. At the same time, the network of independent educational institutions was dissolved. The very symbol of this process, as registered in the Hungarian collective memory, was the unification of the Bolyai University with the Romanian Babeş University in 1959. This act provoked such a drama as suicides, which two professors, Zoltán Csendes and László Szabédi, committed in protest. Finally, the process of gradual dissolution of the Hungarian Autonomous Region beginning with the first half of the 1960s was seen as the last "assault" on the institutional residual basis of this minority (Vincze 1999, 84).

In the meantime, the industrialization and urbanization efforts, as well as the accomplishment of collectivization and the implicit resettlement of the rural workforce to the emerging industrial centers, changed dramatically the profile of the urban communities. The migration of labor force to urban areas affected the ethnic balance of cities and towns in Transylvania. These processes were perceived by Hungarians not only in terms of social engineering or economic planning, but also as a collective trauma, for its elite had lost much of the political influence and the administrative positions, numerically as well as geographically: the Hungarian community was deprived of influence even in the

administrative, economic or political structures at regional and local levels. In addition, a major setback was registered in quantitative terms with regard to the education in the Hungarian language, and this was perceived as a danger to the institutional frame of cultural reproduction. For these reasons, the social engineering process had in the Hungarians' collective memory an ethnic dimension.

The legitimation through nationalism and the Stalinist cult of personality were already present in the mid 1960s. Yet, both reached a climax in 1968, when Ceauşescu became a national hero in view of many Romanians and a maverick ally in the Soviet Bloc (compared to Tito), due to his acts of defying the Soviet Union and strengthening Romania's independence in foreign policy (by opening and maintaining ties with West Germany, Israel, communication channels to the Arab nationalistic governments, Vietnam and the Third World countries) (Deletant 1998, passim). Simultaneously, the administrative reform of 1968 led to the elimination of the Hungarian Autonomous Region, which had already lost its importance and relevance after the "reshaping" of 1961. Instead, the traditional county system was reintroduced, but the new county borders were drawn in such a way as to depose the whole pre-1965 administrative apparatus of its influence and grip in the policy making. This situation generated open demonstrations in the Hungarian inhabited region of the Szeklerland, but these actions were skillfully instrumented by Ceauşescu to get rid of old local nomenklatura and place his own trustworthy people (Sarány & Szabó 2001, 21-65). In one of his best known novels, writer András Sütő conveyed the spirit of the time through the image of his mother, whom he asked: "What shall I bring for you from Bucharest, mother?" as he had to go on duty there, and her answer was: "Fresh air" (Sütő 1970). This represents a testimony from the first decade of the Ceauşescu era, which in fact was misleading for a considerable time quite a number of prominent intellectuals, and not only from inside Romania.

In reaction, the Hungarian cultural elite practiced the writing of secret protest memoranda and the "ius murmurandi." Among those who reflected on the decline of the Hungarian network of cultural reproduction in Romania, there were two generations. The first included intellectuals socialized in Marxist debates since 1935, like Edgár Balogh, Lajos Takács, József Méliusz, while the second, post-1945 intellectuals, like, András Sütő, Pál Bodor, Géza Domokos, Károly Király. All were reunited under the sign of a new representative body (Magyar Nemzetiségű Dolgozók Országos Tanácsa - National Council of the Workers of Hungarian Nationality), which was organized by the communist state-party in 1968 and had its first meeting on 8 July 1969 (Vincze 1999, 88; Lipcsey 2008, 307). However, the role destined to this organization was to become clearer not much later, once Ceauşescu announced in 1971 that "the nation is not going to disappear from history, but to increase its role" (Vincze 1999, 88). To this turn of the official discourse, the Hungarian community

reacted with a long row of demands for restoring the once achieved and then lost rights. These protests represented evidence, on the one hand, of the frustrations accumulated in time, and on the other, of the still existing illusion of establishing a dialogue with the "enlightened tyrant."

In 1972, Ceauşescu reinforced his earlier statements and declared that the building of the Romanian socialist nation was a priority: "the socialist nation was to be more homogenous than the bourgeois nation" (Vincze 1999, 91; Lipcsey 2008, 305- 311). At the same time, the Chinese and North Korean experiences were already influencing the Romanian communist leader in shaping a "min-cultural revolution" in this country. This change in cultural policy envisaged a fight against "cosmopolitan ideas" and "revisionism," which was to be to be carried out in all areas. Accordingly, the Stalinist ideological vigilance was reintroduced in association with legitimizing nationalistic elements. In this new context, Ceauşescu's reaction to a new memorandum of 1974, which asked again during a plenary of the National Council of the Workers of Hungarian Nationality for the reestablishment of the previously existing rights of the Hungarian minority through the voice of Takács Lajos, was clear-cut: the real mission of the council was not the defense of the Hungarians' rights, but the implementation of the socialist economic, social an cultural plans among the "Hungarian-speaking workers of Romania" (Vincze 1999, 88-89). In those years, the Securitate made it also clear that all those who gave voices to open demands (the cases of Jenő Szikszay, Zoltán Zsuffa etc.) were put under close surveillance and isolated, even terrorized until some committed suicide (Vincze 1999, 89).

The 1977 plenary of the National Council of the Workers of Hungarian Nationality was called only to ask the Hungarian representatives to openly distance themselves from the "revisionism, irredentism, Horthysm which endangers the integrity of the country" (Vincze 1999, 89; Lipcsey 2008, 316). Beginning with that year, the nationalistic propaganda of Romania's Stalinist leaders, which implied the advancement to a different stage in the plan of social engineering known as "homogenization," as well as the increasing international isolation of the Ceauşescu regime, contributed to the emergence of the phenomena of dissidence and samizdat. The memoranda authored by Lajos Takács and Károly Király were a part of a broader trend among the Hungarian left-wing Marxist intellectuals, who became increasingly estranged from Ceauşescu's version of Stalinist nationalistic totalitarianism (Vincze 1999, 92).

In this conflicting domestic context, the Hungarian-Romanian debate at the level of the two neighboring communist states emerged to become quickly prominent due to the publicity made around some officially supported publications (Vincze 2009, 109-214). In the mid 1970s, the Hungarian Academy of Science formed a research group of historians, whose task was to

produce a ten volume compendium of Hungarian history. At the meeting of the CC of the RCP on 22 September 1975, Ceauşescu used an imperative tone to demand the Romanian historians to "respond to the attacks" of their Hungarian partners. The new "frontline" became the history of Transylvania. The participants used not only scientific publications (*Történelmi Szemle*, *Századok*, *Magazin istoric*), conferences (the Second International Congress of Thracology held in Bucharest in September 1978), but also ideological platforms (for instance, the periodical *Era Socialistă*). The meeting between János Kádár and Nicolae Ceauşescu, which was held in Debrecen and Oradea in June 1977, represented the last meeting of the two heads of party and state for a long time to come. The concluding document of this official meeting contained the idea that ethnic minorities represented "a bridge" between the two socialist nations, but the Romanian side insisted also on the idea that the questions related to ethnic minorities were part of the internal affairs of the two countries involved, emphasizing in this way the principle of non-interfering in the domestic policies of the neighboring state (Vincze 2009, 114-115; Földes 2007).

The response to this mutual agreement came from Hungary unofficially. Drawing from Herder's prediction about the disappearance of the Hungarian language and nation, the Budapest-based writer Gyula Illyés made references to the Hungarians living in Transylvania in an interview for a Paris-based periodical. This interview marked another crucial moment of the dispute: its internationalization (Illyés 1978). Several letters of protests authored by Zádor Tordai and Károly Király were then published in the West with the help of the organizations of the Hungarian immigrants in the USA (Vincze 2009, 158). Consequently, when Ceauşescu was paying his last official visit in the USA in the 1978, two such organizations, the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation and the World Union of the Hungarians, manifested in New York for the rights of the Romanian Hungarians. Obviously, this demonstration irritated to paroxysm the Romanian communist leader. The debate became then increasingly polemical with an article published by the Romanian writer Ion Spălăţelu on 4 May 1978, in the periodical *Contemporanul*. This article introduced a new theme: Horthy's fascism and the conflicting collective memories of the two communities in Transylvania, which was cut in two parts by the Second Vienna Award of 30 August 1940, held under the patronage of Germany and Italy. The accusation which pointed to the sufferings of the Romanians under Hungarian administration during WWII radicalized with Ion Lăncrănjan's volume of 1982, entitled *Cuvânt despre Transilvania* (A word on Transylvania). The official Hungarian authorities considered this a direct attack against their country and the prestige of their own leaders, which the neighboring socialist country launched through this author who deliberately use an ultra nationalistic tone.

The polemic stirred by this book estranged even more the representatives of the two communities, who could hardly maintain the dialogue from then

onwards. For instance, Balogh Edgár, an important Romanian Hungarian intellectual and opinion maker of true Marxist beliefs, was an adept of negotiated compromises with the Bucharest-based regime, for he believed in both the construction of the socialist society and the protection of the cultural rights of the ethnic community. Although he still believed in the possibility of influencing the Romanian decision makers through direct contacts and dialogue, he became gradually marginalized in the public space, while his channels of communication could no longer be maintained.[10] Increasingly isolated, he had the initiative of buying multiple copies of Lăncrănjan's books in order to block its dissemination. This naïve maneuver represented an act of resistance, which was relevant for a personal way of thinking (Vincze 2009, 129). József Méliusz, another representative figure of the Hungarian elite with Marxist convictions and well-established liaisons inside the communist leadership, was put under the surveillance of the Securitate after Lăncrănjan accused him of irredentism. To this accusation he responded with an official letter of protest presented on 20 April 1982 to Ceauşescu, in which he threatened the calumniator with a trial. Consequently, his open literary response to Lăncrănjan was denied publication (Vincze 2009, 132-133). An anti-Hungarian campaign seemed to be orchestrated by the Bucharest regime. Thus, Bucharest-based Hungarians like Géza Domokos and Sándor Huszár considered leaving the capital city in order to avoid possible consequences of this campaign. Even János Fazekas, then the vice-prime minister in the Romanian government, was affected after he protested against Lancrănjan's accusations and demanded an official positioning against the ideas from this book. On 20 May 1982, during a meeting of the Political Executive Committee of the RCP, Constantin Dăscălescu and Iosif Banc asked for his retirement, while Ceauşescu supported them tacitly.[11]

Many other representatives of the Hungarian community, such as Gyula Szabó, György Beke, János Gyöngyössy, Zsolt Gálfalvi, Ödön Bitay, Lajos Demény, Pál Bodor, authored letters of protest, which they did not make public, but addressed directly to authorities. János Szász and Lajos Kántor even sent such letters to Dumitru Radu Popescu, the president of the Writers' Union and a nomenklatura member in charge of propaganda. Ernő Gáll, the editor of *Korunk* in Cluj, warned the Romanian officials about the "tense situation created among Romanian and Hungrian intellectuals by the above mentioned book." From among the memebers of the Romanian community, Marius

[10] Edgár Balogh tried also to persuade the Hungarian authorities through the Hungarian Consulate in Cluj to refrain from making any further steps that could lead to the escalation of the conflict (Vincze 2009, 157).

[11] On the next day, Constantin Dăscălescu was nominated by Nicolae Ceauşescu as Ilie Verdeț's successor to the office of prime minister, in charge of forming a new government (Vincze 2009, 135).

Tabacu, professor of musicology, and Ioan Aluaş, a well-known professor of sociology at the Babeş-Bolyai University, also protested against Lăncrănjan's type of narrative (Vincze 2009, 133-134). In May 1982, Géza Szőcs and Marius Tabacu wrote another letter, which ten intellectuals from Cluj co-signed; the latter registered it directly to the CC of the RCP headquarters. In Târgu Mureş, a similar collective letter was authored by writer András Sütő (who was also an alternative member of the CC of the RCP), then revised by György Gálfalvi and Béla Markó, and signed by 36 individuals, including Géza Domokos. This letter protested against the Lăncrănjan book on grounds that it was "against the line promoted by the party leadership on the question of nationalities" (Vincze 2009, 136). Even that mild protest was denied support by some of the representatives of the Hungarian community who were part of the RCP establishment, such as Mihály Gere or Gyula Fejes, so it was taken to Bucharest by Domokos's wife.

In contrast to all those mentioned above, who addressed letters to the CC of the RCP because they still believed that the solution to the problems of the Hungarian community in Transylvania could have been solved only by the party, the younger generation no longer entertained this illusion. For instance, the *Ellenpontok* group lacked the strong Marxist convictions of the older group, so they tried through their samizdat to gain the attention of the West and to internationalize these problems, which they framed as a human rights issues. They believed that the solution for their ethnic minority was to be found in the model of liberal democracy and not in the Soviet-type of socialism. Thus, they addressed a memorandum to the CSCE meeting, which was held in Madrid in September 1982 (Vincze 2009, 158). The present study does not aim at analyzing in-depth the Hungarian-language samizdat in Romania; this is the topic of another on-going project. However, this study provides an overview of this phenomenon, presents the main groups of intellectuals who were involved in this enterprise and underlines how their pre-1989 civic activism was transformed into the post-1989 political commitment to build a new organization to represent the Hungarian community.

Between 1977 and 1989, there were at least three well-known Hungarian anti-Ceauşescu samizdat series of publications and three corresponding groups of intellectuals. The *Ellenpontok* group organized itself around Attila Ara-Kovács, Géza Szőcs, Sándor Molnár, Károly Antal Tóth, who managed to disseminate the alternative publication with the same name between 1981 and 1983.[12] The *Limes* circle was mostly active in Bucharest between 1985 and 1989, while among the intellectuals connected to this circle were Gusztáv Molnár, Levente Salat, Gáspár Miklós Tamás, Károly Vekov et al.[13] Finally, *Kiáltó Szó* was edited in Cluj in 1988, mainly by Sándor Balázs with the support

[12] For the documents of the samizdat *Ellenpontok* and memories revived by participants, see Tóth (2000).

[13] On the *Limes* circle of debate and the samizdat edited by the participants, see Molnár (2004).

of György Nagy, Sándor Tóth, Árpád Páll, Róbert Schwartz and his wife Anikó, Zsolt Mester, András Visky, Zoltán Kiss, Levente Salat, Tamás Jakabffy, Ágnes and Sándor Farkas Bende, László Fábián, Marius Tabacu and László Tőkés.[14]

In Romania, there were fewer manifestations against the regime than in any other country of the Soviet bloc. However, there were some workers' revolts in 1977, in the Jiu Valley, and in 1987, in Braşov, while a short-lived independent trade union was established in 1978. Nevertheless, the Securitate acted always in such a way as to isolate the individual cases of protest and succeeded in keeping the intellectuals distant from the masses of frustrated working people. Thus, neither an organized opposition as that in Poland nor a network of intellectuals producing a samizdat-type of independent media existed. In short, there were isolated dissidents before 1989, but no structured movement able to challenge the communist establishment (Petrescu 2013). Paul Goma, Gheorghe Calciu Dumitreasa, Dorin Tudoran, Mircea Dinescu, Ana Blandiana, Doina Cornea etc. were well-known dissidents in Ceauşescu's Romania, but they did not really have contacts with their Hungarian peers. In fact, the only cases of inter-ethnic collaboration in protest against Ceauşescu, which the Securitate files also illustrate, were those between Doina Cornea and Éva Gyimesi, to which one can add the support given by Marius Tabacu to Géza Szőcs and then to the editor of the samizdat *Kialtó Szó*, Sándor Balázs.[15]

The first two groups of samizdat-editing intellectuals had been strongly influenced by the reformist socialist ideals of a Marxist thinker from Cluj, György Bretter, around whom a circle including students in philosophy and social sciences functioned in the late 1970s. Ernő Gáll had also a certain impact on their intellectual formation. Thus, the members of these groups adopted critical Marxism and revisionist thinking, but they also had certain liberal beliefs. It was from a leftist platform that Ceauşescu's Stalinist yet nationalist practices were challenged in the conditions in which the non-Marxist domestic opposition was weak. While the winds of change were already blowing in the rest of the Soviet bloc, those who advocated the reformation of the system from within hoped for a change of party leadership at the Fourteenth Party Congress in November 1989. Although the internationalist, reformed communist and pro-Soviet Ion Iliescu was not promoted to the leading position then, the revolution brought him to the fore on 22 December 1989. In this context, the first option of the Hungarian intellectuals who founded RMDSZ/UDMR (Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania – DAHR) was to ally with the Iliescu-led National Salvation Front (NSF). In order to understand such an option, one has

[14] For the samizdat publication named *Kiáltó Szó*, see Balázs (2005).

[15] Doina Cornea and Eva Gyimesi were named by the Securitate agents keeping them under surveillance Coca and Cola. What an example of Securitate's selection of names given to the enemy! See also Lipcsey (2008, 333).

to take into account that the program of the DAHR and even its symbolism recalled the political legacy of the UPM in 1944-47 (Kántor 2013; Fodor 2013).

Established in the purpose of advocating the reformation of the state in order to meet the requirements of a multicultural society, the DAHR included left-wing intellectuals of Marxist or liberal beliefs, such as Géza Domokos, Béla Markó, Éva Gyimesi, Edgár Balogh etc. The break with the NSF came only in the spring of 1990, after the street conflicts in Târgu Mureş. Then, the cultural demands of the Hungarian community advocated by the DAHR led to a massive manipulation of the Romanian public opinion against what seemed to be an escalation of violence. After the elections of May 1990, violence was used again; this time, alleged miners savagely beat the protesters against the political dominance of Iliescu's NSF in Bucharest. In these conditions, the Hungarian cultural elites opted for joining the democratic opposition to the so-called neo-communist Iliescu regime. In reaction, the latter became increasingly nationalistic, especially after 1992, when NSF had to rely on the support of political organizations such as the right-wing Greater Romania Party and the Party of the Romanians' National Unity or the Socialist Party of Labor, which was nostalgic for Ceauşescu's era.

The opposition sustained by the DAHR proposed a single candidate for presidency and thus managed to win both the parliamentary and the presidential elections of 1996.[16] This political option of the DAHR had no ideological roots, for it was not anchored in any affiliation with the ideas specific to the political right. In this authors' view, it was the result of contingency. In the post-communist Romanian context, the DAHR sought for an agreement with those political forces willing to support the interests of the Hungarian community, as defined by the DAHR.[17] At the same time, the analysis above suggests that the political options and beliefs of those who emerged after 1989 as leaders of the Hungarian community were shaped by their pre-1989 dissidence and involvement in the samizdat phenomena. Due to these activities, they adopted a combination of human-rights centered, liberal and Marxist revisionist ideas. Their experience under communism was unique. On the one hand, their perception of reality was in obvious conflict with the dogmatic vision of the Bucharest-based communist party leadership. On the other hand, it differed from that of the Romanian dissidents, who were neither Marxists nor interested in the issue of collective rights. Thus, they could hardly find a common

[16] The opposition which gained control over political power after November 1996 united under the umbrella of the Democratic Convention two main traditional parties of Romania, the National Peasant Party and the National Liberal Party, aside the Social-Democratic Union, which consisted of the historical Social Democratic Party of Romania (PSDR) and the post-communist Democratic Party (PD) led by the former Prime Minister Petre Roman, and finally the DAHR (Pavel & Huiu 2003, 226-230 and 244-284).

[17] One can observe the same kind of logic in the DAHR's political support to the post-2000 political left and then to the post-2004 political right governments.

platform of protest. These multiple narratives reflect different perceptions of the social, economic and political issues. When reconstructing the communist past, one should consider this diversity.

To conclude, the strategy of the politically active Hungarian intellectuals in Transylvania in the post-communist period originates in their particular experience of Romanian communism. In contrast with the interwar elite, which hoped for the revision the borders that separated this minority in Romania from the Hungarian state, the postwar representatives of the Hungarian community in Transylvania opted for the institutionalization of collective rights and integration. Their main goal was to build the premises of successful dialogue and negotiation with the Bucharest-based authorities in order to achieve social and political integration under the communist and presumably internationalist regime. When confronted with the increasing nationalism of this type of communist regime, the elite of the Hungarian community reacted by radically reformulating its strategy of achieving the main goal. Since the dialogue failed, the only option was resistance against the policies of the Romanian state, which were perceived as a direct threat to the cultural reproduction of this minority. Thus, some representatives of the Hungarians in Transylvania engaged in acts of open dissent against the communist regime in the 1970s and increasingly in the 1980s. It was from their dissidence that the post-communist political organization of this community emerged to become the main advocate of minority rights during the transition to democracy.

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